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BY

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FRIENDS,

I am profoundly grateful for the signal honour that unredeemed India has conferred on me. I have accepted the responsibilities of this great office made more formidable to me by the lustre of great names, at a time, as Mahatma Gandhi put it, "of unexampled difficulty" only in the belief that it was a compliment to South India and that, in the discharge of my task, I shall have your full support and co-operation.

The National Demand and its Sequel

The foremost of our duties for the coming year is to mobilise all our forces on the issue of the National Demand. It was formulated in February, 1924, in the Legislative Assembly by Pandit Motilal Nehru on behalf of the Nationalist Party consisting of the Swarajists and the Independents. It asked the Government to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with

a view to establish full responsible government in India and for that purpose to summon at an early date a representative Round Table Conference to recommend the scheme of a constitution for India with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities; and to place the scheme for approval before a newly elected Indian Legislature after dissolving the Central Legislature and finally submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute. That resolution was passed by a majority of 76 to 48 against the Government; and though the Swarajya Party began their work in the Assembly with a gesture of honourable co-operation the Government arrogantly brushed it aside. But in order to side-track the principal issue, they appointed the Reforms Inquiry Committee to investigate the feasibility and desirability of securing remedies for the difficulties and defects connected with the working of the Government of India Act but consistently with the policy, structure and purpose of the Act. The evidence that was given before the Committee by those who worked the reforms devotedly as well as the report of the minority established clearly that the system of Dyarchy, both as a step towards responsible government and otherwise, was an egregious failure. The attempt of the Government of India to induce the Assembly to accept the recommendations contained in the Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee was met by a reiteration of the national demand in the Assembly in September, 1925, in an amplified form. This time also the Assembly by a majority of 72 to 45 passed the resolution, Swarajists and Independents acting together. It was a second time rejected by the Government.

In December 1925, the Congress held at Cawnpore ratified on behalf of the country the terms of the

settlement offered by the Independent and Swarjya Parties by the resolution on the national demand. To enforce that demand in case it was rejected and to carry on the fight for Swaraj, the Congress adopted a programme of work both in the country and in the Councils and provided for the education of the electorates in its policy and the capture by Congressmen, under specific pledges, of the elected seats in the several legislatures.

In March, 1926 on the refusal of the Government to accede to the demand, the Swarajya Party walked out of the Assembly and the Provincial Councils in accordance with the Congress mandate. The leader of the Party in the Assembly said on that occasion: "We hope and trust that the nation will give a suitable reply to the truculent rejection of our demands and send us again in larger numbers with a stronger mandate and, God willing, with the sanction for fulfilling its aspirations and enforcing its commands."

The General Elections and Their Significance

The results of the campaign thus opened and of the general elections that followed and are just now over, have justified the policy of the Swarajya Party in the Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Councils and have abundantly proved the wisdom of the great experiment inaugurated by the Congress at its Cawnpore Session. Throughout the country, thanks to the Congress electoral campaign, there has been a tremendous amount of political education and the vehemence, the extent and the concentrated fire of the opposition, communal or other, have only served to demonstrate the utter soundness of the programme and policy of the Congress, and the strong hold it has over the people.

The provinces of Madras, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, in a striking degree, and the other provinces including the Punjab, to a lesser extent, have responded to the congress mandates and come under the congress discipline. If in some provinces our success has not been as great as in others, it is due solely to the fact that Congressmen there were divided amongst themselves and was not due to the superiority in the programme or policy of any definite political party. Having regard to the fact that it is the first time that the Congress has run the elections on an all-India scale and that there were serious differences amongst congress leaders and workers, the successes achieved under the Cawnpore mandate all over India are, both in quantity and in quality, most remarkable. Though they have not been a surprise to most of us, they have come as a shock to the bureaucracy and its allies in every province. Nor can we forget that most of those who succeeded against the Congress candidates, though they had not subscribed to the Congress pledges, succeeded still as congressmen. On the whole he who runs may read the lesson of the elections that the centre of of political gravity has decisively and definitely shifted from the bureaucracy and its Indian supporters to the National Congress.

The real meaning of our success at the general elections, the success of those that obeyed the Cawnpore mandate, cannot be easily missed. It constitutes an unmistakable endorsement of the national demand and of the policy of walk-out that marked its rejection by the Government. It also signalises the enthronement of a sound and robust nationalism in place of communalism as a dominant political factor. In Madras, Brahmin-non-Brahmin differences have ceased to be the great prop of the foreign bureaucracy that they

have been till now. And it is a matter for gratification that in Tamil Nadu and in Behar, Muslims have joined the Congress Party and been successful in the elections. Above all, the country has given its unequivocal verdict against the system of Dyarchy and the rest of the political apparatus established by the Reform Act. For, we must remember that congress members form the largest single party in almost every legislative council, though in some provinces they are much more numerous than in others. And they went to the polls on a clear pledge of non-acceptance of the office of Minister till a satisfactory response was made by the Government to the national demand. Nor can we overlook that the elections with all the difficulties that we had to face have been a severe test of our capacity for Swaraj, and have given us patience, skill, a quiet confidence, a nation-wide organization, party loyalty and a thoroughly democratic outlook.

We are asked to work Dyarchy

We have by now largely cleared the decks for action and must therefore concentrate our attention next on enforcing compliance with the National Demand. We shall for the present keep the door open for a just and honourable settlement. But we must not deceive ourselves into the belief that the Governments in England and in India are now willing to concede our demand or even to open negotiations with us for the purpose. They will be, as they have always been, prodigal of words that mean nothing and will deploy against us all the arts of a trained and evasive diplomacy. The only answer, we have so far had from Government, in every variety of accent and phrase, is, that we should "lay aside for the time being our demand for Swaraj and should soberly and wholeheartedly work the present constitution." It is convenient-

ly ignored that the new constitution was worked by various groups of moderate or progressive politicians "soberly and whole-heartedly" during the period of the first councils. The boycott of the Councils by the Congress, far from obstructing the path of the Reform Act enabled men who had confidence in the Government and in whom the Government had confidence to co-operate unreservedly and to work the Act. Then again, in the period of the second councils after the Act, in many provinces and notably in Madras and Bombay, groups of politicians worked the constitution exactly in the way in which they were required to do. How can it be said that the constitution has not been given a fair chance or has not been worked for 6 years by Indians pledged to co-operate "soberly and whole-heartedly" with the Government? Even the opposition by the Swarajists, during the term of the second councils was in strictness only a parliamentary opposition, except in Bengal and the Central Provinces. Whether the constitution was worked by congressmen or by moderate groups, should make no difference to the Government. What the Government therefore requires really of us is that the Congress should give up its demand for Swaraj and merge itself in the bureaucracy.

Shall we still think it wisdom to harbour the wish that is father to the thought or to discover proofs of a changed heart in ingenious hints dropped by press correspondents or in the impressions of those that are in touch with high officials or with past or present members of Parliament who are more able to advise us than to bring round British opinion and parties to our view? The least therefore that we must insist upon is a businesslike statement in public, precise and concrete, and satisfactory in content and

tone, by the Government in India or in England. Meanwhile, we must follow up the victories we have gained by consolidating all our forces and by steadily increasing the pressure of the councils and of the country upon the Government. We must pool all our resources together and make a firm stand against a non-co-operating bureaucracy and wrest Swaraj from their unwilling hands. I trust the lapse of 6 years has not not made us either forget the wholly illusory character of the Reforms or develop a new tenderness towards them. Our experience has, if anything, abundantly shown that the reforms have not given the people's representatives any real power and can lead neither to self-government nor to good government. A brief and dispassionate examination of the salient features of the Reform Act should convince us that we would be stultifying ourselves if we developed a new faith in it.

Is Dyarchy Workable?

That Dyarchy is neither a helpful stage in the progressive realisation of Responsible Government nor serves as apt machinery for grinding down good Government, has been the unanimous verdict of experience and is now practically admitted on all hands. Lord Birkenhead himself has referred to it more than once in apologetic terms though he insists upon our working it. Its true purpose is not merely to provide for the administration of certain subjects by the Governor and his Executive Council, but to attenuate the power of the Ministers and the control of the Legislature over the transferred subjects. Under this grotesque system, the Ministers are always under official tutelage and domination so that they cannot breathe the oxygen of freedom. The joint deliberation between Ministers and Members of Council for which Lord Willingdon took credit proved to be in

the interests of the reserved half. Even without it, most matters relating to transferred subjects require to be considered by those in charge of the reserved departments and to that extent are shaped by the opinion of that half of the Government. This was fully established by the evidence before the Reforms Inquiry Committee. The fact that members of the Civil Service are themselves Members of Government makes the Ministers helpless in their relation to the members of the Civil Service. Again, the rules relating to financial restrictions and the control exercised by the Finance Member as one in charge of a reserved subject over important aspects of transferred subjects, make the power of the Ministers as unreal as that of puppets. Lastly, the division of subjects between the reserved and the transferred halves is such that the pith and marrow of a government are with the former. As regards the conflicts between the two halves of the Government, the Governor is made in effect a constitutional dictator in the province and dyarchy can be tempered only by the frequent exercise of his powers. Further the power of the Governor on his sole authority to make laws relating to a reserved subject contrary to the decision of the Legislative Council furnishes a capital instance where the reformed Legislative Councils possess much less power than their predecessors. That one man can make laws quite as valid as the laws made by a legislature and in the teeth of the latter, proves our charge that the Reform Act has in reserved departments set up an irresponsible autocracy.

The position as regards transferred subjects is no whit better, though we frequently make Dyarchy the gravamen of our charge against the Reform Act as if its removal alone will end all our troubles. For, we must remember that in respect of transferred subjects there is no

responsible government and the mere transfer of reserved subjects to additional Ministers on the same statutory conditions as at present govern transferred subjects will not improve matters. At the outset, each Legislative Council has a solid block of nominated and official members to support the views or policy of the bureaucracy on questions relating to transferred subjects though a majority of elected members may decide otherwise. Thanks to the nominated members and to the number of special constituencies, supple, reactionary or obscurantist, the composition of a Legislative Council is such that the Ministers have to depend upon the support of the Governor and his Executive Council. Nor is it very difficult for a Governor to form, against a majority group of elected members, a Ministry with the aid of a minority group of elected members and of his own nominated and protected block. This has been done again and again in every province. This inherent vice in the structure of a Legislative Council deprives it of any real representative character and its elected members of any adequate power. Secondly, under existing conditions, the power of appointing Ministers exercised by a Governor is not a mere technical mode of naming the established leaders of the majority in the Council but is a substantial power of patronage by which a nobody or anybody can be made a benami leader to carry out the Governor's policy. Thirdly, we all know that a Legislative Council has no control over the items of expenditure known as non-votable under each transferred head including the salaries and allowances and all other payments of officials belonging to superior services in that department. These non-votable items amount to a high percentage of the expenditure relating to each transferred subject. Fourthly, the Ministers have little or no control over the

members of the Civil or other public services serving in departments dealing with transferred subjects, and the Governor has and exercises the power of making all appointments to posts in the transferred departments. The statutory independence of the Indian Civil Service is the most outstanding feature of the Reform Act. All the parliamentary apparatus of a responsible government will prove to be a costly and pompous futility unless the completest control over the Indian Civil and other services is unreservedly secured to Ministers fully responsible to a wholly elected legislature. Fifthly, the Governor is empowered to over-ride the Ministers' decisions on questions relating to a transferred subject and direct him to act otherwise. Sixthly, the Governor has an emergency power—the emergency to be determined by himself—to authorise expenditure notwithstanding a vote of the Legislative Council in respect of transferred subjects. Seventhly, the Governor has power to stop legislation in respect of transferred subjects notwithstanding the opinion of the Legislative Council. Eighthly, he can return a Bill relating to a transferred subject to the Council for reconsideration with his recommendations which are in effect obligatory. What this power means was forcibly illustrated by Lord Willingdon in Madras in connection with the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill. Ninthly, when a Governor cannot through his Ministry manage a Council to his satisfaction, he can himself administer the transferred subjects as happened in the Central Provinces. Tenthly, a Minister can hold office during the Governor's pleasure which does not mean the formal expression of the Council's pleasure but his own independent pleasure against the opinion of the Council, as was vividly demonstrated by Lord Lytton in Bengal. Eleventhly, the Governor is entitled to disallow any

motion for the adjournment of the business of the Council to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance even when it relates to a transferred subject. Lastly, the allocation of the revenues for the administration of transferred subjects depends primarily on the will of the reserved half and of the Governor and not on the decision of the Legislative Council.

I have restated the position under the Act only to make it clear that even if Dyarchy goes, a Legislative Council will have control over the transferred subjects only if and when the Governor allows and not otherwise.

The Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee concedes that the Dyarchy which was introduced is "clearly a complex confused system having no logical basis, rooted in compromise and defensible only as a transitional expedient." It is not possible to imagine to what it is a transition or how it is defensible except as an expedient for putting off the grant of Swaraj or of substantial reforms leading to Swaraj. The majority of the Committee add: "While the period during which the present constitution has been in force has been too short to enable a well-founded opinion as to its success to be formed, the evidence before us is far from convincing that it has failed." This oracular judgment is much too ingenuous to deceive anyone and is a sufficient condemnation of the system of hybrid executives, councils partly elected and partly nominated and all the other devices of the sham scheme of reforms which was admitted by its authors themselves to be charged with potentialities of friction. The Minority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee concludes that "the present system has failed and is incapable of yielding better results in future."

Central Government

Nor can it be pretended that the Central Government is at all responsible to the Indian Legislature. In the first place, that Legislature has no power of the purse. Nearly three-fourths of the expenditure of the Government of India excluding that on Railways, is withdrawn from the vote of the Legislative Assembly and as to the remaining fourth, the Government is empowered to restore any demand which has been refused or reduced by it. The Governor-General has also an emergency power to authorise at his discretion any expenditure, he being the sole judge of the emergency. In the next place, the Governor-General may direct the stay of any bill, clause or amendment. In the third place, in addition to the power to make temporary ordinances, the Governor-General is given, what he had not before the Reform Act, the autocratic power of certifying any bill and signing it as a permanent law on his sole and absolute authority notwithstanding the refusal of the Legislature. Fourthly, the Assembly is neither wholly nor in reality a representative and democratic chamber. Between a third and a fourth of its strength consists of nominated members and a three-fourths majority of elected members is required to defeat the Government and to enforce the popular will. For, the Government's 40 votes are bound to neutralise at least an equal number of elected votes. Further, from amongst the elected strength must be deducted the seats provided for special constituencies which, in the Assembly as in Provincial Councils, are amongst the fortifications of the bureaucracy. Lastly, there is for the Government the additional safeguard provided by the second chamber. And the Council of State is so planned and constructed as to checkmate the Assembly and to form an impregnable,

citadel for the Government. It has, time and again, proved itself to be reactionary and has turned down the decisions of the Assembly on most vital questions. For instance, it agreed to the enhancement of the Salt Tax and to the Finance Bill and supported the certificate of the Viceroy against the decision of the Assembly. It rejected the Bill passed by the latter for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. It passed the Bill relating to the Bengal internees that was rejected by the other chamber and the resolution relating to the Lee Commission recommendations against its decision and it approved of the recommendations of the Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee against the opinion of the Assembly.

It is then abundantly clear that the centre of gravity both in the central government and in the provinces, alike in transferred and in reserved departments, when analysed closely, is, both in fact and in constitutional theory, in the Executive Government, in other words, in the bureaucracy. It would therefore be a tragedy if we still sought to discover, in all this statutory hypocrisy, the germs of self-government.

Desabandhu's Offer

While our national demand remains rejected, there has been no response to the gesture of peace that was made by the heroic figure of Desabandhu Das. No fairer offer could have been made than was made by him at Faridpur in his great and moving appeal for reconciliation. As he said: " The Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the Commonwealth in the near future and in the meantime till Swaraj comes a sure and sufficient foundation of such Swaraj should be laid at once. Further, the Government should divest itself of

its wide discretionary powers of constraint and follow it up by a general amnesty for all political prisoners ". The long history of repression, that has darkened our struggle for freedom, proves that the curve of repression and the curve of reforms go inter-twined; of repression gilded with reforms, of reforms withered by repression. The case of the Bengal internees as well as of the Sikh patriots is about the most flagrant violation of elementary justice we have had; and the harrowing story of the Bengal Ordinance and other internees as well as the earlier story of the Punjab agony and abasement shows that we are asked always to move in a vicious circle with shame and humiliation as our badge, and not Swaraj as our birth-right. No settlement with Government can be held to be just or honourable that does not involve a complete reversal of all repressive measures and a clear guarantee against their future repetition.

Further, while the plea was set up that the Government of India Act could not be revised before the appointed term in the direction of more substantial concessions, no difficulty was found by the Government in amending the Act so as to give effect to the Lee Commission recommendations involving an annual increase of 1¼ crores of rupees in the emoluments of the superior services.

India's Status

Again, while India is being denied Swaraj, the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Empire Prime Ministers has restated the position of the Dominions as " autonomous communities within the British Empire equal in status and in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs though united by common allegiance to the Crown and freely

associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". That Committee adds, and rightly, that every Dominion now and always must remain the sole judge of the nature and extent of its co-operation. India is, of course, excluded from this privileged communion. She is not to be a free country, equal in status to the Dominions, but is to bear the galling burden of an Empire; and the nature and extent of her co-operation are to be determined for her by others. The time has, I think, come when we must make it clear to others and to ourselves that if England wants India to remain within the British Empire it can be only on the terms just stated; and that otherwise none can or should set any limits to her freedom.

If we confine ourselves to the abolition of Dyarchy are we certain that the residuary powers of the Governor will be surrendered? What again is the use of responsible provincial Government without a responsible Central Government? The comedy will be enacted differently but its spirit and purpose will be there if the Central Government is not a fully responsible government. Supposing again, both the Central and the Provincial Governments are made responsible governments and we are still not to touch the Civil Service, the position will be no better. The Indian agents of the foreign bureaucracy will be more numerous and there will be more competition for Ministerships but the masters will be the same. We cannot therefore compromise on the question of appointment and control of the services or provide for them a dual control. Any scheme of self-government will be nothing but an empty form if the control over the army and navy and the control over the political relations with Indian States, as distinguished from foreign relations with other countries, are not given to our Swaraj Government. Any such reservation will deprive the Indian Swaraj

Government of financial, administrative and political control over the Indian people including Indian Princes. Otherwise, self-governing India will be menaced by an army under foreign control and the Indian States will be perpetual thorns in its side if nothing worse. These departments are now included in the definition of Dominion Status and form items 1 to 4 in the schedule of central subjects administered by the Government of India and are indispensable for the maintenance of a real Swaraj Government.

Army and Navy

The naive concession made by some of our friends as to our incapacity to administer the army and the navy contradicts our demand for Swaraj and supports the argument of the advocates of the alien rule that tell us, "you cannot have an army and navy to defend you: how then can you have Swaraj?" It is but an illustration of our diffident mentality to assume that we cannot maintain or control an army or navy. There is absolutely no truth in it. There is a splendid Indian Army which has distinguished itself in a hundred fields in all parts of the world. That the Muhammadans and the Maharattas formed and led armies in other days according to the then standards of equipment and efficiency proves that there is no inherent deficiency in the Indian people in that respect If one thing more than another is illustrated by any true history of India, it is that our people had plenty of martial spirit. As to the navy, the ancient Indian people were an adventurous and sea-faring race and had far-flung colonies. But, it is not the historical or racial argument that calls for enlargement, for Free India can buy and man a fleet and maintain an army on the most modern lines. It is in ultimate analysis nothing but a question of finance

and the training of men. Japan and China and all the lesser states of the world that enjoy self-government have found these things and there is no reason why we cannot find them. I would, therefore, urge upon you that we should clearly think out what Swaraj means and should not abate an iota in our demand for full self-government.

In the meantime, our paramount duty is, as I have already urged, without waiting any longer for a response that does not come, to organise more completely than we have hitherto attempted, the will of the nation on our demand for Swaraj.

Our Council Programme

To that end, the twin principles of self reliance in all nation-building work and of resistance to every anti-national activity must inspire all our efforts, as they certainly inspired the non-co-operation phase of the struggle. In that view and in view of our present limitations, and for the immediate present, the programme of work both in the councils and in the country, as laid down by the Congress at Cawnpore cannot, I think, in its general outline, be easily bettered.

And first as to work in the Councils. The general policy of Congressmen in the Assembly and the various councils should be one of resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj; and in particular, Congressmen in the legislatures should:—

(*a*) refuse to accept offices in the gift of the Government until in the opinion of the Congress a satisfactory response is made by the Government to the national demand;

(*b*) refuse supplies and throw out budgets (unless other-

wise directed by the All India Working Committee) until such response is made by the Government;

(*c*) throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its powers;

(*d*) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country;

(*e*) take steps to improve the condition of agricultural tenants by introducing and supporting measures to secure fixity of tenure and other advantages with due regard to the rights of the Zamindars; and

(*f*) generally protect the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial and adjust the relations between landlords and tenants, capitalists and workmen.

This was framed in the light of experience so as to be acceptable to as large a number as possible of workers in the political field and it represents the minimum amount of resistance that is required for the success of our movement.

The Question of Office

Controversy has raged round the question of non-acceptance of office; but it should be easy to come to a decision upon it, if we kept in view the spirit and objective of our fight against the bureaucracy. In no province is the congress party in the council in an absolute majority so as to be able to take office and dictate terms to the head of the Government and the reserved half. To form a ministry, it will have to coalesce with other groups and to lower its flag and to lose its distinctive

character. And any such Ministry if formed can hold office only on sufferance and with the support of the Government and its nominated and official group of votes. On the one hand, it will be indistinguishable in achievement or rather the lack of it, from a Ministry formed by any non-congress group of members. If, on the other hand, it attempts to maintain its spirit and carry out its purpose it must either resign instantly or acquiesce ignominiously in its failure. Again, a strong Minister can only attempt to improve some of the details of administration but can neither help to change the system of Government nor can effect even material improvements in administration. By improving a detail here and a detail there of administration, he would rather help to perpetuate the existing system of Government by casting his reflected benevolence on the bureaucracy. In reality, no one who has closely followed the achievements of Ministers in the several provinces can seriously believe that any Ministry can, without a proper system of self-government, get good government for the country.

We should also clearly realise that the power of an opposition, though indirect, is very real and much more effective than the power of Ministers and that if we are disciplined and energetic and in sufficient numbers in any Council we can carry out our policy and programme more easily than the Ministers.

The refusal to accept office till a satisfactory response is made, constitutes an amount of political pressure that is necessary and sufficient to induce the Government to come to a settlement. By accepting office, the Congress is bound to become an unconscious ally of the bureaucracy. And, if the most advanced party in the country takes office, where will be the determined and disciplined opposition in each council to fight against

Dyarchy or for Swaraj? Neither the Ministers nor their party can openly speak and vote against the administration of reserved subjects. Again, neither the refusal of the Government to release political prisoners and internees nor the rejection of our reasonable Demand nor that of our offer of honourable co-operation can be forgotten when we are asked to take office, not as part of a settlement, but as a token of our unconditional surrender. Our self-respect prohibits us from retracing our steps when, instead of defeat, victory beckons us to march ahead.

It is said that if we cannot organize forthwith civil disobedience there is no other honest alternative than to own ourselves beaten and accept office. Neither horn of the dilemma exists save in one's imagination. The policy we are pursuing is thoroughly logical and practical and, if persisted in for a while longer, will be crowned with success. After the severest denunciations of the Reform Act on a thousand platforms and the most cogent demonstration of the futility of taking office, it were an anti-climax to think of Ministries now. I am certain that the Government wants congressmen to become Ministers only on the terms of "sober and whole-hearted co-operation" with the reserved half and the bureaucracy. I am sure, we are all convinced that without a fair measure of self-denial we shall never be able to achieve anything, and that a policy of continuous opposition and resistance to the bureaucracy is required to give tone to our organization and life and vigour to our movement. Lastly, let us not forget that the policy of non-acceptance of office is neither unconditional nor for all time. On the other hand, its relaxation or modification depends upon the attitude of the Government and its willingness to agree to con-

ditions more or less similar to those that were adumbrated by Desabandhu Das at Faridpur.

Objection is raised to the continuance of our present policy in the Councils on the ground that it has been tried for the past three years and that we are not yet in sight of the realisation of our hopes. The charge of barrenness is falsified by the party's splendid record of achievement in the last Assembly and in the Councils, and by the results of the general elections as whole. Shall we forget that it was to create an atmosphere of resistance both in the Councils and in the country that we entered the former and that we succeeded in making their atmosphere invigorating and markedly different from what it was before? We have not yet fully acquired the habit of resistance. And the power of resistance must be indefinitely increased till it fulfils itself. Again, this time, the work in the country must be our first care; it will then easily gather such volume and intensity as to sweep everything before it.

The Cawnpore session of the Congress marked a turning point in the history of the Congress and of the country. By making the programme and policy of the Swarajya Party its own and by absorbing that party, the Congress gave a new orientation to our political activities. It resolved upon the nationalisation of the legislatures established by Government by bringing them under its own control. This change of attitude on the part of the Congress towards legislatures has been fiercely attacked from more than one quarter. It has been denounced as a constitutional heresy to claim for the Congress a control over the legislatures. The justification of the claim is, however, obvious. Experience during the period of the non-co-operation movement had shown that the Councils functioned as anti-

national institutions and thwarted the attempts of the Congress to obtain Swaraj. It was, therefore, necessary to ensure that the political institutions established by the nation and the political institutions established by the government should function as a single organ and speak with one voice.

National Government

Our foremost duty is to keep constantly before our eyes the vision of Swaraj, what it is, what it requires of us and what it will not permit us. It means nothing less than that the Congress should have the fullest control over the people and should have a steadily increasing number of workers knit together in bonds of unshakeable loyalty and perfect understanding. It is only in proportion as the control of the Congress over the people increases in area and in intensity we can obtain or establish Swaraj. We must make the Congress the centre of all our activities and build up Swaraj in and through it. It is, therefore, right and wise for the Congress to organise thoroughly all the electorates whether for the legislatures or local bodies and to bring them under its discipline and control. The millions that have the franchise and the millions that have not, have to be habituated to accept voluntarily and cheerfully, the mandates of the Congress as the mandates of a national government. While the aim of the non-co-operation movement was to form the national administration leaving the political and administrative bodies under the influence, discipline and control of Government, what we should now do is to bring under Congress control not only the people who are more or less indifferent to the political and administrative institutions of Government but also those who seek to utilise them

directly or indirectly. At the recent elections, have been demonstrated the love of the people for the Congress and their willingness to come under the Congress banner. It is of the very greatest importance that the electorates for the legislatures and local bodies should be so thoroughly educated and nationalized that they and the Congress may become identical in spirit, purpose and action, if not in numbers. The congress, and not the Government, must issue mandates to the legislative councils, to the local bodies and to the village administrations. Under this scheme, both the work in the country and in the councils can be so closely inter-related as to develop the maximum amount of political pressure against the government. When the electorates, the legislatures and the Congress learn to act as a single organisation, sanctions for the enforcement of national rights and demands will, of themselves, spring into existence.

Again, we have to organise the country in respect of the many serious grievances of the people. They are not yet fully alive either to their rights or to their wrongs. The study and investigation of grievances must form an essential part of congress work. The congress members of all the legislatures should meet as a separate national legislature and frame model laws for adoption by the people. The remedying of grievances must be upon the basis of self-reliance and resistance and not on the basis of co-operation with the government. The people must be taught to assert their rights and to develop their powers of self-reliance and resistance. The issues of prohibition, of taxation of land and above all of unemployment will give us sufficient momentum and take us a long way forward.

If incessant propaganda is carried on in town and in village, if the congressmen inside and outside the councils

interest themselves, each group in the work of the other, and if people are organised in respect of grievances upon which they feel most strongly, the end will soon be in sight.

We must establish village sabhas that shall, under congress mandate, administer village affairs and be the units of a permanent Swaraj. The great practical difficulties that are in the way must not depress us but should only serve as a powerful stimulus to exertion. Mastery, as has rightly been said, is acquired by resolved limitation ; and the acid test of Indian leadership, of resolute patriotism and of constructive ability consists in the determination and contentment of men to organise and lead villages for the cause of Swaraj. The secret of success in the work of village reconstruction mainly lies in the discovery of apt rural leadership.

In this way, the congress will ere long become the national government.

Capture of Local Bodies

The work that I think must next be undertaken is the capture of local bodies in every province. Both in connection with the constructive programme and on its own merits I would urge upon you the need for such action. If congressmen pledged to carry out the constructive programme and to follow the advice of local congress committees make it a point to capture as many seats as possible in the municipalities and local boards, the national movement will gain tremendously in strength. You can, in the first place, powerfully help the anti-drink campaign and place it on a practical basis ; you can also nationalise education in municipal and board schools and spread the cult of Khaddar amongst teachers and boys and amongst municipal voters and employees.

You will be able to devise ways and means to relieve unemployment to an appreciable extent. And those in service of local bodies will become nationalised if their administration is undertaken by Congressmen. You will benefit the people in other practical ways, besides giving them the advantages which a municipality or board is intended to give but so seldom gives. In the second place, Congressmen will acquire local leadership and establish control for the Congress over the people of the locality. At present, the control is either exclusively with persons who are hostile or indifferent to the national movement or is divided between them and us. The present influence of the bureaucracy and its ministerial or other allies over local bodies must be replaced by ours and the hold of the Congress over the people greatly strengthened. In the third place, you will be able to communicate to others that burning love of country that is in you. Fourthly, it will enable all sections of congressmen to come together and will give us additional organisations from which and by which the fight for Swaraj can be carried on. Lastly, village re-construction and village government can with the resources of the local bodies be more easily achieved than if we have to set about that work without such aid. We have already succeeded to some extent in the direction of nationalizing local bodies and have demonstrated its feasibility. Neither the occasional failure of the experiment nor academical arguments founded on obsolete theories, nor all the undoubted difficulties incidental to elections and the formation and maintenance of parties should deter us from persevering in it. The local bodies must be reformed by the abolition of nominated seats and must become parts of our great national organisation.

Constructive Programme

No less important than the programme of work in the Councils and in the local bodies is the constructive programme of the Congress. Neither our political pre-occupations, nor any comparative table of values which one may frame for one's self should make us forget that khaddar, prohibition, and removal of untouchability as well as the other items of work are vital aspects of our national movement.

Khaddar

Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi's inspiration and iron will, the restoration of the Spinning Wheel to its ancient-primacy has made the boycott of foreign cloth real to an appreciable extent and has powerfully stimulated swadeshi spirit and enterprise in all forms and directions. It has by its persuasiveness affected to a visible extent the national psychology, and has lent a new dignity to our manhood and womanhood. For, it has given us a feeling of self-respect and has raised the Indian name in the estimation of the Western and Eastern world. From bitter hostility and contempt it has journeyed through all the stages of misunderstanding and has at last found a home in our hearts. It has demonstrated our constructive ability and is increasingly providing relief for unemployment while the State is doing nothing to mitigate it. Above all, work in this direction means love and love means influence. And the political pressure exerted by a boycott of foreign cloth is there all the time. The transfer of jurisdiction over khadi production from the Congress to an expert organization has, I think, ensured for it a permanent and conspicuous place in our national life unaffected by the controversies and fluctuations of politics.

I trust the All India Spinners' Association will become a nation-wide labour organization which, if it cannot be identical with Swaraj, will go some way towards it. For, its potentialities are considerable; it can greatly help in the work of village reconstruction and in the establishment of village government. During 1925-26, Khadi production was 19 lakhs and this year it is expected that there will be an increase of 25 per cent. The increase in output has been accompanied by a steady improvement in quality and in patterns and Khadi has become distinctly cheaper. Nevertheless, the demand for Khadi is not as rapid and universal as one would wish. It is, therefore, our paramount duty to see that continuous political and patriotic backing is given to Khadi and to the boycott of foreign cloth and that the new spheres of influence which our national organization has won through the message of Khaddar are not lost to us by our indifference to it. And let us remember that of the two greatest achievements of Mahatma Gandhi, non-co-operation and Khaddar, though it is difficult to decide which is the greater, Khaddar is at once the radiant symbol of our self-reliance and of our power of resistance.

Prohibition

We have not, I am afraid, latterly paid much attention to the question of total prohibition. Our movement will gain in moral grandeur if we successfully organise the will of the nation in that behalf. The measures that were adopted during the active period of non-co-operation were no doubt marked by temporary exaltation and magnificently illustrated our spirit of sacrifice. They have, however, led to no permanent changes in the landscape. No Minister has during the past six years been found, and I doubt whether a Minister will now be found, to be

courageous enough to bring in a bill for total prohibition and to resign his office on its rejection or disallowance. Anyhow, while the fight for Swaraj is carried on in the legislatures and outside, we must devise effective ways of removing the drink evil which is among the greatest causes of poverty in many provinces. In my province, where the Congress Party in the Council is pledged to make total prohibition a major issue, next only to Swaraj, the drink revenue amounts to nearly 6 crores of rupees out of a total provincial revenue of 16 crores. At least twice the amount of revenue derived by the Government in each province under Excise will represent the minimum loss to the people. The loss of revenue to the State due to a policy of total prohibition is more apparent than real; for there is bound to be more than corresponding increase in national wealth. It can, however, if necessary be made good in other ways and should not make us hesitate to take decisive measures. I do feel that on this point the national conscience is not yet sufficiently roused. And yet both Islam and Hinduism can easily supply tremendous driving power if we will but put our hands to it.

Untouchability

The removal of untouchability was long confined to the platform of social or religious reform and did not then make rapid progress. By making it one of the items of the constructive programme of the Congress, we have, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, almost in the twinkling of an eye materially changed the attitude towards it alike of the educated classes and of the masses. The final solution of the question, however, depends in great part upon the improvement of the economic conditions of the vast bulk of the untouchables. And the time has, I think

come when in order to ensure its speedy accomplishment, increasing concentration on it is required. As in the case of Khadi, an *ad hoc* organisation consisting of enthusiasts and religious and social reformers will, if properly led, be able to complete the work so splendidly begun by the congress. Neither foreign nor domestic critics are, however, right when they assert that untouchability is a formidable obstacle to Swaraj, or that its removal will automatically bring about Swaraj. We cannot wait for Swaraj till it is removed anymore than we can wait till caste is abolished. There is the capital instance of the United States of America achieving freedom long before the abolition of a very real and wide-spread slavery. But we must all agree that we must make an end of untouchability, apart from any question of Swaraj and whether we ever win Swaraj or not. While I would deprecate the iterated rhetorical stress on untouchability as a serious impediment to Swaraj and the consequent admission in favour of foreign domination, the higher philosophy of Hinduism as well as the history of religious dissidence in our country emboldens me to claim that the rule against untouchability has neither part nor lot with the indestructible soul of Hinduism. Judged by any test, humanitarian, rational or spiritual, patriotic or democratic, we cannot with decency uphold in Hinduism the dogma of an immutable untouchability. It clouds our vision, limits our experience, hardens our heart, narrows our sphere of responsibility and prevents our ideals of justice, love and sincerity from being perfect. The feeling that a particular caste or tribe or sect as such is by divine ordinance invested either with a mystic superiority or spiritual guardianship over others or has been condemned by God to bear the visible symbols of a hopeless degradation is destructive of the divinity in man, which

is the central doctrine of Hinduism. It is not good for any one, neither for the guardian nor for the ward. As an *Ahaval* of Kapilar, current in my province, puts it "Who can see any unlikeness of form between men such as there is between bull and buffaloe? Vasishta born of lowly mistress to Brahma like red water-lily springing up in mire; Sakti born of a Chandala woman to Vasishta: Parasara born to Sakti of Pulai woman; Vyasa born of a fisher-girl to Parasara; all these by study of the Vedas rose to high estate and are famous as holy men". And if we are still in doubt, it is dissipated when we listen to Vemana's disconcerting query: "Why should we constantly revile the Pariar? Are not his flesh and blood the same as our own? And of what caste is He who pervades the Pariar?"

We must, therefore, realise that untouchability is but the off-spring of man-made custom and has no divine sanction behind it. On the other hand, from the point of view of Hinduism, it prevents it from spreading far and wide and sending its roots deeper and robs it of the transforming influence of missionary fervour.

The Congress Party in the legislative councils will, I have no doubt, attend to these and to the other items of constructive work to the extent to which they can be furthered in and through the legislatures. I trust, it will, in particular, tone up the educational institutions belonging to or aided by the Government and secure the passage of enactments including in courses of compulsory studies such subjects as will inculcate in boys and girls a consuming patriotism, courage and a wide national outlook.

Labour and Unemployment

The organization of labour has been included by the Congress at Cawnpore in its constructive programme.

We must give it a front place in our work for the coming year. The welfare of labour, its housing, its provident funds and industrial insurance and all the other things required for improvement in the treatment and conditions of labour are of great national importance. They constitute a reserved subject though they concern us more than the bureaucracy. Labour legislation in India whether it concerns registration or trade unions or other matters is by no means satisfactory. Labour is not represented by its own men in the existing legislative bodies as the present electorates are too unmanageable and expensive. And nomination is a wholly inadmissible method of securing representation either of labour or of the depressed classes or of any class of the population. The congress must therefore increasingly promote the welfare of labour and the Congress party in each legislature should represent its interests and pay special attention to its requirements. Fortunately labour in India is becoming more and more insistent on its rights and is slowly organizing itself. There is perfect identity of feeling and interest between the national movement and labour. None need fear that in India the legitimate interests of labour will be sacrificed to capitalist interests; or that the Congress can neither reconcile them nor be just to both.

Next to Swaraj, the greatest of India's needs is the relief of poverty and unemployment. Owing to a variety of causes it has assumed colossal dimensions. The average income of an Indian is hardly Rs. 68 per annum. We are face to face with un-speakable squalor and misery and starvation. The first duty of a Government is to take adequate measures for their removal; but under the present system of Government the problem is wholly ignored. Otherwise, will the present Government,

for instance, establish the great industry of ship-building on a large scale or start a line of state-owned steam-ships that will earn freight for India and give employment, as Indian Railways do, to tens of thousands of Indians? Assuredly not. We want Swaraj for the purpose of discharging what according to our tradition and culture is our paramount duty. For, Swaraj has to be won before we can establish industries on a large scale and adequately deal with the problem of poverty and unemployment. In the meantime the Congress party in the several legislatures should make every attempt to get laws passed compelling the Government to relieve unemployment by the establishment of State industries, by opening up of new tracts for cultivation and in other ways. It should also educate the country and link unemployment to the Swaraj movement in such a way as to produce an increasing amount of pressure on the Government.

Government's Currency Policy

A grievance of considerable magnitude has recently arisen in connection with the currency and exchange policy of the Government. The recommendations of the Currency Commission adopted by the Government do not establish the effective gold standard with gold currency which India needs for her prosperity but are injurious to Indian interests. These and the resolve of the Government to fix the exchange at 18d, its continued deflation of the currency and its sales of Reverse Council Bills contrary to the clear assurance given by the Finance Member that the Assembly would first be consulted, have exasperated Indian public opinion. They are bound to result in gross injustice to our industries, to our agricultural population and to our exporters. A little reflection

will make us agree that the lower price of imports is no compensation especially when we remember the expenditure on imported goods by the vast bulk of the consumers is but a small percentage of their total expenditure. The loss inflicted upon India is very substantial, whether we have regard to the drop of $12\frac{1}{2}$ % in the real value of agricultural produce or of exports or have regard to the competition between products of Indian, and foreign industries or to consequential increase in agricultural indebtedness. Nor will additional taxation be, as contended, necessary if the exchange is at 16 *d*. The question should not be regarded as a recondite question for economic Pandits or as if its eventual adjustment does not mean serious loss at present. The currency policy of the Government has a far-reaching importance: it not only affects certain key interests but the general welfare of the country. To say that sections of Indian capitalists want to exploit us is but an attempt to prejudice us which must be resisted. In our fear lest our own capitalists use us, let us not allow ourselves to be exploited by foreign capitalists in the interests of England and to the general detriment of India. I am confident that we shall be able to hold the scales even not only as between rival communities but as between rival interests in India. I cordially welcome the formation of the Indian Currency League and trust that it will adequately educate public opinion on the question of the ratio of the gold standard, gold currency and other cognate questions. But I am certain the League will be able to achieve nothing, either by debate and vote in the Assembly or by protest outside, unless it comes into line with the Congress and unless its members harness themselves to the dynamic politics of the Congress.

Indian States

Indian States, in the opinion of some friends, present a difficult and delicate question in connection with our demand for Swaraj. The difficulty only exists so long as we do not go into it and the delicacy arises because we have one view for British India and another for Indian States. I share, to the full, the sympathy of all those who think that Indian States are a kind of very imperfect Swaraj. They remind us of the high estate from which we have fallen and our national instinct, sound in the main, prompts us to preserve these relics of an ancient dignity. But the reconciliation between sentiment and the imperious necessity for Swaraj is by no means difficult. The rulers of Indian States ought, in their own interests and in the interests of their subjects, to content themselves with the position of hereditary governors or administrators of their territories under a system of representative institutions and responsible government. It is better, much better, for an Indian ruler to be the head of a democratic government and to rely on the support of his people than to occupy the very dubious and anxious position he does at present. He will then, if he is a just and wise ruler, be in a safer, freer and more dignified and influential position than he is in now; if he be unjust or vicious, he will not deserve any protection either from the present government or from Free India. The population of the Indian States is about 72 millions, somewhat less than a third of the population of British India. The identity of sentiment and civilization, of interest and aspiration, between the two is unaffected by political barriers; and echoes of our Swaraj movement are heard in the States. The people of British India, when they are fighting for Swaraj, are

entitled to have the Indian States brought into line with British India. Matters affecting the relations of the Government with Indian States or relating to the affairs of such States, ought not to be excluded, as they are at present, from the consideration of the Central legislature. We in British India are, by ties of blood, religion, culture and business so intimately connected with those in the Indian States that it is impossible to deny them our help in their aspirations and in their grievances. The people of each State should have such representation in the Assembly as may be necessary to safe-guard their interests till each Indian State obtains a system of responsible government.

Greater India

The lineaments of our great ancestry reveal themselves in us, to-day, however thin in the transmission, the ancient blood has become. And the adventurous spirit of early India which built up long ago a greater Bharata Varsha to the East and to the West, to the North and to the South is not extinct. It is now seen in the greater India which our brethren, in humble and laborious fashion, are building for us in far off lands against unparallelled odds. The status of Indians abroad, whether in South Africa or Kenya, in Fiji or Guiana, in Ceylon or Malaya, in America or Australia, depends inevitably upon the status of Indians in their own land; and Swaraj for India depends in its turn upon the brave and unfaltering spirit of our kith and kin across the seas.

The patient industry and skill of the Indian labourer wins rich fields of cereals and sugarcane, plantations of rubber, tea and coffee and smiling gardens of fruit, flower and vegetable from virgin forests and unpromising lands amidst the hardships of unfamiliar countries and

climates. He is therefore induced, with the permission of the Indian Government, to emigrate to distant countries where he lives a life of incessant toil and misery often unsweetened by the happiness of a real home. But when the need for his labour ceases, he is asked either to submit himself to humiliating conditions or given notice to quit. The position of Indians in South Africa and Kenya stands on a much worse footing while their claims to equality are distinctly greater. Indians abroad are of all classes and positions and should be entitled to full rights of citizenship there just as much as others. In any case, the term "cooly" connotes the dignity of labour and the Indian cooly settler, lowly as he is, is far superior in status to the original convict settler in Australia. No white man, I believe, refuses to employ an Indian on a lower wage, but his passion for improving the lot of Indians insists on their adoption of higher standards of living.

With patience and perseverance, our brethern are solving the question of racial equality all over the world. We can help them only by winning Swaraj for India. In the meantime, the Cawnpore resolution to open a foreign department to look after the interests of oversea Indians and to carry on propaganda concerning their status, has to be sufficiently implemented. The deputation of our South African friends to India last year, was an education in itself. I would suggest the holding, once in a way, of a session of the Congress in South Africa. Further, a small committee should be appointed to go to the principal foreign countries where Indians, whether traders, students, labourers or others, reside, so as to get into direct personal touch with them.

Asiatic Federation

The time has perhaps come for us seriously to think of a Federation of the Asiatic peoples for their common welfare. So long as our neighbours were ruled by irresponsible autocrats, such an idea was clearly out of question. Now that Angora, Persia, China and Siberia are governed by democracies, a federation of Asiatic democracies will make for peace, prosperity and freedom of Asia and therefore comes within the range of practical politics. Signs are not wanting to indicate that our neighbours take keen interest in us and we must reciprocate it. In order to promote better understanding and closer relations between India and other Asiatic countries, frequent interchange of visits by appropriate delegations should be arranged, as well as other steps taken. We have too long neglected the possibilities of a cultural and business union with all Asiatic countries.

Communalism and Nationalism

I have reserved, to the last, my remarks on the struggle between communalism and nationalism. The critical phase of the struggle is over and the issue is no longer in doubt. The riots and disturbances that have recently disfigured our social life have drawn forth nearly all that is bad in communalism. The forces of nationalism are steadily and visibly triumphing over the forces of communalism. The results of the elections in the Punjab and the United Provinces are as much due to serious divisions amongst congressmen as to the confusion caused by communal cries. Those two provinces have not, as it appears to me, given their verdict in favour of communalism. For, the number of Congress candidates that succeeded there on the Cawnpore mandate

is larger than the number that succeeded on the Hindu communal ticket. In Bengal, Behar, Madras and in the rest of India, the answer of the electorates against communalism has been decisive. In Madras, the electorates, with the masses of the general population at their back, have cashiered a communal party that, for 6 years, thanks to Lord Willingdon, has been responsible for the acute tension of feeling between Brahmin and non-Brahmin. They have loyally supported the Congress ideals of nationalism, unity and justice and have effected a remarkable change in the atmosphere of the province. Electorates predominently non-Brahmin in composition, have returned, either unopposed or after contest, Brahmin and non-Brahmin Nationalists to the local council and to the Assembly and the brunt of the fighting was borne by patriotic non-Brahmins, not less hungry than others for Swaraj. In Bihar, the loyalty to Congress both amongst Hindus and Muslims has been very striking and the national harvest for council and assembly is abundant. In Bengal, the Congress party in the council will be much stronger than before and communalism has been held in check. I feel sure Bengal will maintain, as ever, her political primacy.

That communalism is a negation of nationalism and is an obstacle to Swaraj, is being rapidly and very generally realised. I am confident that wherever intensive propaganda, sincere and persuasive, clearly analyses the fallacies underlying it, communalism will go to the wall. Happily, prejudice and suspicion are not deep-seated amongst Indians and communalism is but their off-spring. Again, who will not agree, after some political education, that communal conflicts necessarily involve that there should be an arbiter and that if the whole of India

were divided into two warring communities, the arbiter would always be a foreigner? We must not only reach, but hold fast to, the conviction that we are Indians first and last and right through. National representation and national leadership must be our aim and not communal leadership and communal representation. A patriotic Hindu or Mussalman should, at all times and at all costs, desire to represent and lead not only his own community but the other community as well.

In Great Britain, differences of race, language and habits between Englishmen, Scotchmen and Welshmen did not prevent them from establishing self-government. Nor did the bitter and prolonged struggles between Protestants and Roman Catholics prevent the advent of self-government in England, France and Canada. Nor did the divisions between the white races in South Africa make the grant of self-government impossible. The differences between Hindus and Mussalmans or between Brahmins and non-Brahmins are by no means such as to prevent them from being one nation. There is no conflict of interests between them in respect of all those matters which tend to their common welfare or make for a national advance or relate to in the establishment and development of self-governing institutions.

Fundamental Safeguards

Religious doctrines and institutions and such social usages and personal laws as have historically been due to a distinctive culture are alone peculiar to any religious community. There should therefore be a fundamental law of Swaraj to guard against the making of laws by any legislature in India that may affect liberty of conscience, freedom of religious observance or association, the right to religious education and, at the option of the commu-

nity concerned, the right to personal laws. Another safeguard has been devised by the Working Committee of the Congress to prevent communal hatred and strife and to protect the legitimate interests of minorities. The rule is to the following effect:—

> No bill, motion or amendment relating to any inter-communal matter should be moved or discussed if a majority of three fourths of the members of any community affected thereby in the legislature, are opposed to the introduction or discussion of such a bill, motion, or amendment. And the congress party in the legislature concerned, should take such steps as may be possible to give effect to this resolution in each case. But if their efforts are not successful, and a three fourths majority of the members of any community of the congress party affected by such an inter-communal question consider that it should not be made a party question, then the congress party in the legislature shall refrain from making it a party question.

Plea for Tolerance

In the early days of a world faith, again, conversion was of its essence. Though each community should be free to make conversions, no resort to conversion is really any longer useful or necessary. For, the lives of the best and most pious men in each community are a fitter and more effective propaganda in that behalf than definite missionary effort. But wherever the latter is made, it should be open and general and neither secret nor directed to the converting of particular men or women. Let us realize that no great and long-established religion gains in truth, beauty or spirituality with any increase in its census figures.

It is not by hatred of another's religion or of those that profess it that the interests of one's own religion are advanced. Asoka in his Edict on tolerance proceeded on abundant experience and a clear perception of the "essence of the matter", as he calls it, and of real and lasting values. Says he: "He who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect."

Communal Representation

Moreover, no community can, in these days, really progress in secular affairs unless the nation as a whole advances, unless, in other words, the other communities either acquiesce in the rise of one community or make equal progress. The best way of advancing politically one's own community is, therefore, to raise the status of all the communities as a whole. For, if you seek to advance your own community, all the other communities band themselves together against yours. Communalism is not so much a positive idea of benefiting one's own community as a destructive desire to obtain advantages at the expense of the other communities. And how, one may well ask, is a community benefited by one of its members securing a post in government service or succeeding in an election? If he conducts himself justly and honestly as a member of the public service, members of his community can share only in the general good and can gain no undue advantage. If, on the other hand, he favours them at the expense of others, he will become unjust and corrupt. Again, what is every-day distrust between two individuals of the same community is dignified into communal distrust or ten-

sion when it arises between two individuals belonging to different communites, though, in both cases, the motive or cause, whether it be ambition or envy, bad temper or enmity, necessity or greed, difference in opinion or temperament may be the same.

That much abused expression communal representation is a misnomer; for all the communities are equally interested in all public questions and in the country's problems and in particular solutions of them. Such differences as exist are temperamental and individual and not at all communal. Taxation and other burdens imposed by the State bear on all and grievances are common to all and methods of redress or agitation are not peculiar to a community. Nor is it by mathematical or mechanical formulae that justice between communities in the matter of the services or in other matters can be rendered. The congress stands for equal rights and opportunities for all classes, castes, and communities. And Indian nationalists are developing a high sense of justice; they are even sensitively just. Let us realize clearly that to uphold justice between man and man is to uphold justice between community and community. As a safeguard a negative rule against members of any community or caste monopolising offices is all that is required. There are so many communities and there is so much of competition in these days in India that it is impossible for any community to create such a monopoly. Again, neither a Hindu nor a Muslim member can at all represent his religion in a legislative council or any question except where his religion is sought to be affected.

Politics and Religion

The intrusion into politics of religion, and very often of dogmatic religion, must be resisted as a primitive or mediaeval idea, born of theocracies, and disastrous alike to religion and to politics. Hinduism and Islam will gain immeasurably in strength and purity if they are not mixed up with secular politics. I do not speak of morality or of that spiritual quality which is common to all great religions; for thereby politics and organizations are cleansed and made sweet and wholesome. In the evolution of States, theocracies have not survived as they were responsible for fanaticism, persecution and internal strife and neglected the material welfare of the people and the proper arts of government.

Hinduism and Islam

Lastly, let us clearly grasp the truth that neither Hinduism nor Islam stands in danger of being destroyed by the other. Both are great religions, ages old; and both have an abiding hold on vast populations. They have again and again come into severe conflict with each other and have survived it, as they have survived the shocks of foreign invasions and foreign civilizations and all other catastrophic changes. In mediaeval conditions, Hinduism and Islam both continued to flourish in full vigour, independent of the religion of powerful despots who were backed up by their own communities, numerous and armed. In modern times, when there is far greater religious tolerance, and when autocracies have been replaced by democracies and democracies are notoriously secular in their outlook and priestly influence has largely declined, it is wholly chimerical to imagine that if either the Hindus or

Muhammadans in a province constitute a majority in a democratic form of Government, the religion of the minority will suffer. No proselytizing can equal the hearty crusading fervour of early and mediaeval times: and the two great religions of India have in spite of innumerable conversions and re-conversions adjusted and consolidated themselves and have acquired an adamantine stability. A Hindu State that attempts with all its authority to destroy Islam will be subverted in a minute and a similar fate will befall a Mussalman State that attempts to destroy Hinduism.

Let us not forget, in the fever of political controversy, that the strength of each religion is derived from God and is rooted in the souls of Prahladas. Not all the tortures of a Torquemada nor all the burning at the stakes nor all other forms of persecution have been able to destroy the mystic quality of the human soul. Neither Hinduism nor Islam derives or requires strength either from the present or from any future Government. Both stand, far, far above Swaraj which is not comparable to them. Neither foreign Governments nor self-Governments, neither democracies nor autocracies, can destroy that seed of faith which is in every one of us, that inspired interpretation of the universe to which one clings for guidance and solace in this world and for salvation in the next. Hindus and Mussalmans have lived in the past and will live in the future as patriotic fellow citizens and firm and loyal friends. In the transaction of public affairs, in all matters of secular advancement, in all aspects of the administration and on all public, political and national questions, they easily can and should think and feel and act as Indians. I fervently appeal to Hindu and Mussalman leaders with all the strength of my feeble voice to consider the need for concerted

action in a calm and dispassionate spirit and to unite indissolubly for their common deliverance.

Appeal for Unity

It appears to me that the vision of Swaraj has become somewhat dim in the dust of internal strife and our hunger for it less keen in our greater desire for the philosophy of individualism. The need of the hour is not philosophy but action, not freedom for the individual but freedom for the nation, not alone unity in ideal and object, but also unity in method and action, direction and pace, and above all, not polemics and projects but organization and discipline, first and last and right through. The question naturally suggests itself: Should we have distinct parties in the country or in the Congress? I know the weight of names is against me, but I would beg a calm and earnest examination of the question with Swaraj brain and Swaraj heart. The answer comes again and again from the depths of our being, from the holy of holies, from our tortured soul, that the righteous should link hands against unrighteousness. There can be only two parties in India, the party of the Government and its adherents that obstruct Swaraj, and the party that fights visibly and unceasingly for Swaraj. An army has several arms, but it would be a singular army indeed if its cavalry fought its infantry and its artillery opened fire on both. The duties of all groups or parties in the country and in the congress is vigorously to co-operate with one another in their fight for Swaraj just as the arms of a sensible army will do in a real war.

I deprecate the philosophy of individualism in a supreme struggle for freedom against a powerful people with their trained bureaucracy and with unlimited material resources. On a question whether a particular

course is wise or unwise, will succeed or fail, will accelerate Swaraj or retard it, to make one's opinion or judgment or feeling a matter of conscience is false philosophy. On a point of religion, of morality, of honour, one's own conscience must be the arbiter, but in transacting the affairs of a country, when a decision is not irreligious, immoral or dishonourable, I fail to see how we may rely on our right to differ from one another and yet uphold the discipline necessary for an organization fighting for Swaraj. If the soldiers in an army claim similar right when engaged in a battle they will have short shrift at the enemy's hands. We want freedom for our country and must, therefore, pay the price for it.

Again, shall we cease to be constantly on the alert and prefer the easier to the harder way, retreat to advance? Shall we avoid taking prompt decisions, refrain from action when a decision has been come to or indulge the critical mood? Shall we not concentrate on the imparting of a new momentum, the attracting of fresh recruits and the consolidation and stiffening of our ranks? Or, shall we relax our wills and substitute patience for impatience, little things for big things, discretion for valour, policy for truth, dogma for faith, and sweet reasonableness for stern determination.

Do we feel that we are unfit to undertake the Government of the country? Is it not actually run by Indian officials and are not the English overseers merely concerned in laying down policies which their Indian subordinates and colleagues who are in no better position than subordinates, are obliged to carry out? The machinery of the Government is already there; only the directing brain and voice are needed and that surely can be supplied by us.

What is needed to break our bonds is only that we should get rid of this creeping paralysis of brain and will, of this hypnotism which the foreigner exercises over the Indian official and un-official, whether his opponent or his friend. The conditions in India are so favourable to the immediate attainment of Swaraj that it were an easy achievement if we could but set our hands to it. One or two men in every village or town have but to shoulder the responsibilities of a real and lasting leadership. Character and transparent patriotism, steady courage and average ability are all that is needed for the purpose. We have been trying to build leadership from above which is an impossible process and from abroad which is a destructive process. We must build leadership from the base and on the spot itself. Efficient local leadership alone and not propaganda or programmes of sorts will solve the problem. For, Swaraj means the ability to set up a local Panchayat or leader that will command continuously the loyal and energetic support of the people in the locality.

With the greatest fervour and in all humility, I would appeal to all leaders, all groups of workers and all schools of thought, in and outside the Congress, to put aside all differences for one brief year and stand together as comrades in arms determined to win freedom. We all, whether Swarajists, Responsivists, Independents or others, long for unity; and none among us is anxious to emphasise or perpetuate differences. But we all long equally ardently for Swaraj. May I, therefore request all friends, whether they agree or not with all that I have said, to see if it is not possible to reconcile the longing for unity with the longing for swaraj without affecting either and in such a way and by such methods

as shall amaze and baffle and discomfit the Governments in India and in England at this critical hour.

We can restore our faith in ourselves only by restoring our faith in each other, for without an atmosphere of energetic good-will and of freedom from suspicion and prejudice, it is impossible to perfect the work of organization that we have begun or to re-impose the splendid discipline that staggered the world till the 10th of March, 1922.

Conclusion

Swaraj is not an intellectual but an emotional proposition. We must cherish it in our hearts with unquenchable faith. Neither genial humour nor mordant sarcasm, neither the persuasion of friends nor the wrath of foes, neither appreciation nor calumny should make our patriotism tepid or qualify the singleness of our purpose. We must, therefore, become possessed by a passion for Swaraj that is not warped by fallacies and impulses, that will stand for a uniform and rapid corporate advance in serried masses, that will know no obstacles, that will not wax and wane with the seasons, that will not be daunted by imprisonments or depressed by failures.

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥
कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

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